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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the experiences with marketing, a new concept at the Library at the University of South Africa (Unisa), which is the largest university in South Africa and one of the largest distance education institutions in the world. Following a discussion of marketing of the tertiary library and the service marketing triangle (organization and staff; market and organization; and the traditional marketing mix of product, price, place, and promotion), the marketing plan of the Unisa Library is described. Highlights include: target markets identified; the communication strategy; use of conventional communication channels and Web marketing; and Web marketing tools, including gateway advertising, product information and recommendation, establishing customer discussion panels and creating a dialogue, targeting specific demographic groups, evaluating gateway success, pricing, getting listed in directories, joining industry hubsites, e-commerce, and internal marketing. (AEF)

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THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA'S MARKETING VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY THROUGH CONVENTIONAL MARKETING CHANNELS AND THE INTERNET

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Introduction

Without the powerful infiltration of the Internet in the information supply domain of libraries, we as librarians might still be in a comfort zone, monopolizing this field. The Internet and its vast distribution capabilities was a wake-up call.

The Web could revolutionise customer relations. The various ways in which companies communicate with prospective and existing customers will be transformed. It moves the focus of customer relations away from the cost of communication toward the quality of the message. E-mail effectively removes the cost factor from the decision-making process, by offering an alternative to the relatively high expense of postal and telephone communication.

With cost issues minimised, new questions arise, What interesting messages can product marketers create? Can they hold the attention of the consumer? Online communications need to be engaging and desirable to the consumer, whether sending a monthly newsletter, an updated product offering or a personalised message.

With the world wide trend of: financial constraints; downsizing; loss of customers; globalization of information; changing educational needs; the evolving discriminatingly aware customer; changing student demands and the need for a hybrid library, the library and information science fraternity came to the realisation that some new approach had to be investigated.

The University of South Africa, also known as Unisa, is the largest University in South Africa and one of the largest distance education institutions in the world. It is located in Pretoria and is a landmark of the capital city. To facilitate its services to approximately 130 000 registered students all over the world, the Unisa Library stocks more than 1,6 million books and other items at the main campus, provincial centres and learning centres in most major centres of South Africa. Unisa offers internationally recognised certificate, diploma and degree courses up to doctoral level in six faculties: Arts, Economics and Management Sciences, Law, Science, Education and Theology and Religious Studies.

The Unisa library using top-flight consultants started a re-engineering exercise in mid-1998, since it was realized that new avenues would have to be investigated to ensure survival in the 21st century. Key products were identified by means of **Strategic Enterprise Modelling**, which included conventional library services as well as new products. These products were tested for acceptancy, viability and feasibility. Critical success factors for implementation of these products were also identified which included many elements of which marketing was the driving aspect.

In the enterprise modelling exercise, a comparative evaluation of envisaged services was done which

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revealed that web-based services outranked other implementation feasibility scores by 18.80 %. This indicates the future trend of service development that the Unisa Library will, as needs be, strategically follow. Projects are therefore currently being launched by the Unisa Library to develop and implement these products.

The Strategic Enterprise Modelling exercise also clearly indicated that the Library will have to adopt a commercial attitude. Marketing will open up the developing customer centred character of the organisation. It will link this service organisation with the customer and connect with his/her prospective lifestyles and dreams. This is a new skill which the librarian of the 21st Century will have to acquire and use as a tool to gain the competitive advantage in this era of globalization of information. Although information has become globalized, human nature thrives on personal attention and demassification.

Marketing should bring about a paradigm shift in any organisation that has not been strategically customer focused and market driven This is an innovation at the Unisa Library that has the potential for substantive impact on customer satisfaction and connectivity as well as commercialisation of services. I would like to share with you the experiences which we encountered on our **marketing voyage of discovery**. I refer to this as a voyage of discovery, since any voyage of discovery means entering the unknown, riding rough seas, weathering storms, exploring and conquering obstacles. This is a new field and challenge to us.

Marketing of the tertiary library

The discipline of marketing is confronting a dual challenge as Murray (1) comments: **(i)** it must deepen its own competence in functional terms. Technology, different customer requirements and new media all dictate the need for new evolving expertise; **(ii)** marketing activities should integrate better with other departments and functions in an enterprise. This is important particularly concerning strategy, new product and service development and in the achievement of long-term customer satisfaction through dedicated order generation, fulfillment and service activities. Everyone in the organisation should be market orientated.

A new approach has developed and the realization has arisen in marketing, namely, that the central marketing task was not selling the product but rather understanding the market demand to make informed choices as to what should be produced. Customers' needs are therefore the guiding strategy in coordinating organisational activities to serve these needs profitably. Murray (2) feels that the market force has become a key concept in the 1990's, that it "involves the continuing and persistent alignment of a firms resources and unique competencies to changing needs and opportunities in the marketplace in order to create profitable and often durable relationships."

We have entered the technological and information era, with the Internet as champion and remote access as the flavour of the day. Tertiary libraries seriously have to consider a strong migration from the traditional walk-in facility, namely a building with branches at satellite campuses and postal delivery of items, to electronic format and remote access and transfer. Migration must be emphasized, but not until tertiary libraries are convinced that: an electronic tuition model is totally acceptable to all students of tertiary education institutions; all customers have access to a computer; all customers are computer literate, and that walk-in customers are so dramatically diminished that they are not a viable market (3).

This migration will also, as required be gradual, until more academic information becomes available on the Internet and the tuition model migrates to electronic format. The competition is not that great at present but tertiary libraries must be aware of the impetus and the avalanche which may be approaching in the form of electronic delivery (4).

Tertiary libraries will have to become market focussed, develop their core competencies, get to know their competitors strengths and weaknesses and then only enter the competitive arena. In my opinion service

organisations are organisations that provide appropriate services, whether on an individual or on a collective basis, to customers, be they individuals, companies, a community or country, to satisfy these customers specific wants and needs. The service can be face-to- face or faceless via technology as the quality is experienced at the time of consumption. The customer should also be prepared to reciprocate with a counter exchange, be it in the form of a service, payment, acknowledgement or sign of loyalty. The success of the service provided will ultimately depend on its relevancy, the interaction between the service provider and the receiver, and the customer's perception of the efficacy of the service (5).

To quote Irons (6) "the need to bring the customer into the mainstream of consciousness in an enterprise and to have an understanding of the customer's real needs - surely is the very essence of marketing". The world around us has become more focussed on service issues and on realizing the value, from the usage of the purchase, rather than from the organisation and its market, with the core product as a focus. However between people their interaction becomes the focus.

The trend to service, from the customers point of view, is a movement away from possession of products as a dominant motivation, to utility. The shift in an organisation or business, is towards experience and utility when supplying or selling a product and away from mere core products. Furthermore, trying to lock up knowledge stifles the life-giving flow of information that allows a system to self-organize and renew itself. Today, the new knowledge equation is knowledge = power - so share it and it will multiply.

The development of technology throughout history has been the greatest catalyst in paradigmatic changes in the global economy. Technology has influenced the way business is conducted, communication systems develop, competition, marketing and knowledge flow changes and therefore how organisations grow and survive.

The service marketing triangle

The library as a service organisation can greatly benefit from Irons' (7) idea that a service marketing triangle exists. He bases this on the KIA Management Consultants service marketing triangle to represent the marketing of services. The organisation and the staff are represented on the left axis and the market and the organisation on the right axis, the traditional marketing mix, of product, price, place and promotion, only operates on the right axis, between the organisation and the market. Using the service marketing triangle it becomes evident that marketing of a service is a much broader task. It is about choosing customers and creating products, according to the customer's needs. It is also about the interaction that takes place when these are brought together.

Zeithaml & Bitner (8) refer to three aspects of marketing on these three axes that would be encompassed in the service mix (which is an adaptation of the traditional marketing mix to accommodate an essential fifth part of the mix, the interaction). Together with "external marketing" efforts on the right axis from the organization to the customer, there should also be "interactive marketing" from the staff of the organisation to the customer on the horizontal axis, as well as with "internal marketing" on the left access from organisation to staff.

External marketing sets the promise of the service. This is anything that the organisation engages in to communicate to the customer before service delivery, what their expectations can be concerning the service promise. Internal marketing's critical role is enabling the staff to keep the promise that has been made to customers. The activities concerning internal marketing, are those that the organisation must carry out to train, motivate and reward its employees. Interactive marketing actually delivers the promise and is based on the assumption that staff satisfaction and customers satisfaction are inextricably linked.

The nature of service marketing is intrinsic in defining the interaction, as the production/consumption process evolves when the customer selects the service face-to-face with the organisation's staff. The staff

factor predominates in the interaction and results in the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the customer with the service or the solution to his/her problem. These perceptions usually offer the organisation the opportunity to create a competitive advantage. It is the interaction, according to Irons (9), which is viewed as the principal product, by the customer because it is this which is the main deciding factor in relating solutions to problems; it is here that value is created for the customer. It is in this interaction that a "bridge", as an analogy, is constructed between the organisation and the customer. This bridge must be crossed mainly at the point of interaction not by the customer to the organisation, but by the organisation to the customer. This becomes the organisation's opportunity.

One would like to add an encompassing circle to this triangle, representing the mission and vision of the organisation, which encapsulates and drives all the activities taking place within the organisation.

The marketing plan established for the Unisa Library

A marketing plan has been set-up as a directive of the marketing project implementation. A specific time frame has to be adhered to for implementation. This plan will be directed by the overall mission and vision of the library. Matters which have been scrutinized and documented are the setting of objectives, internal and external environmental analysis. A competitor analysis has still to be investigated in depth. Questionnaires have been compiled and the results of these will give more directive to the product and pricing strategy. Thereafter the communication strategy will be developed and implemented.

Target markets which have been identified

Current target market segments were identified during the Strategic Enterprise Modelling exercise. Questionnaires were compiled and are presently being sent out to three broad market segments.

- Registered students and ex-students

  Included in this category are: Unisa learners (students up to and including honnors level; Unisa Masters and Doctoral students, students from other tertiary institutions; prospective Masters and Doctoral students; certificate course students; unserviced Unisa certificate students and bridging course students.

- Unisa staff

  Included here are Unisa academic staff; Unisa professional staff; Unisa administrative staff; indirectly paying members of staff which include Unisa supervisors, tutors, temporary staff, contract workers, outside markers and retired Unisa staff and Unisa alumni.

- Commercial clients

  Academics from other tertiary institutions; other libraries; directly paying members; GAELIC Consortium members; donors and benefactors; foreign ambassadors & their spouses; the Internet community; the business sector; government; private sector tertiary institutions; schools; students from other tertiary institutions and ex Masters and Doctoral students.

Marketing of the emerging Unisa hybrid library

The need to continue with a hybrid library is essential in an emerging market scenario typical of the South African society. Our traditional customers and most especially the category Unisa learners must not be neglected in the new marketing paradigm. Marketing should enable the library to serve the needs of this emerging market optimally, since the needs of this very important target group can be monitored better once a dialogue has been created with them.

The Unisa library is also committed to focusing simultaneously on the commercialization approach, which could offer the library the competitive edge as well as survival into the 21st Century in current economic conditions. To the present this has not been focused on at the Unisa library, although research has been conducted into implementing a fee-based service. There is a great demand for these personalized services especially in the business and legal sectors of South Africa. By virtue of the size and wide subject content of the collection of the Unisa Library many businesses could benefit from the services of the Library. One of the factors that requires attention to implement this, is the fact that a mechanism will have to be developed to receive revenue from customers. A policy also has to be developed to channelize this revenue into the existing funding received from the University.

A marketing project implementation team has been assigned, representing every product area, in order to get a broader staff component on board in the emerging marketing paradigm. It must be understood that at present we have no expert marketing staff, but staff who are prepared to accept the challenge of this new field.

The Communication strategy
It must be emphasized that the concept "marketing" is often wrongly equated with merely the advertising of products. Advertising of the products which an organisation has to offer, is a part of the marketing plan and can be referred to as the communication strategy, which is a component of the overall marketing plan.

In especially the hybrid library situation conventional marketing distribution channels will be used to reach the section of the library's customers, especially the less affluent, to communicate to them what services the library has to offer. Simultaneously webmarketing will be developed to remain relevant and competitive and reach the online customer. The marketing of information is a competitive area since these markets are dynamic and ever changing. Marketing on the World Wide Web is the future of especially libraries servicing distance teaching academic institutions, to reach global markets for existing as well as potential customers.

Conventional communication channels
Conventional avenues will still be used. These include certain publications of the University. The Unisa News is sent out to all registered students and staff, therefore this can be used to advertise library services and products. The Unisa Bulletin targets all Unisa staff members. We have also extensively used posters and fliers to reach our students and staff on-campus. Electronic e-mail messages can also be posted via e-mail to our lecturers. All these will still be utilized in tandem with Webmarketing. Publishing product information in the mass media is costly and this would only be considered in rare cases.

Even though the trend will move toward greater Webmarketing, it must be rembered that the conventional media can also be used effectively to advertise the library's Website. It is essential to ensure that all the staff know the address of the Website. The library's Uniform Resource Locator (URL) and e-mail address must appear on all letterheads and business cards. The URL should also be included in the telephone answering service, so that the library is accessible for correspondence 24 hours a day. Leaflets could be swopped with other libraries on which the Website is clearly visible. All media used should prominently feature the library's URL. Pilkington (10)

Our walk-in students also have access to a limited number of terminals which they can use to access our Website.

Web-marketing
The most important feature of web-marketing is attracting traffic to your site. Homepage design can be a commanding marketing tool when created effectively. Those companies according to Wolff (11) that are making a spirited attempt to get Net users to stay at their site are aggressively taking advantage of the

different and unique advertising opportunities of the online world. The Net delivers an audience already familiar with the medium and offers an incredible number of potential advertising spaces: online magazines, Internet directories, services, other company sites, general interest sites etc. Some of these spaces cater for niche markets and specific demographic groups, while others deliver to a large variety of people. The Net also promises to provide completely new ways of attracting consumers to Websites through the technological and particularly interactive potential of the medium.

In the 19 February 1999 (12) issue of Finance Week, an accredited South African financial journal, it was reported that the Internet Advertising Bureau (IAB) Ad Revenue Report, released in February 1999, compiles data directly from Internet publishers, making it one of the industry's most timely and accurate gauges of online advertising revenue. Commenting on the report, IAB chairman Rich LeFurgy says:

> *"This report is the biggest endorsement yet from the marketing and advertising communities that online advertising is here to stay as an integral component of their marketing and branding plans. The industry continues to grow, and shows strength as it does".*

It must be made clear that the Unisa library has implemented some of the aspects being mentioned and might consider implementing others after carefully assessing their benefits.

Webmarketing tools
Effective tools exist which can be used for Webmarketing

- **Gateway advertising**

  Companies, in addition to advertising offline, can advertise online, drawing traffic to their Websites by placing advertisements on other sites.

  A number of high-traffic areas on the Web, especially media sites like Time Warner's Pathfinder (http://pathfinder.com), and directories like Yahoo (http://www.yahoo.com), have begun to actively solicit advertisements. For the most part these advertisements have taken a single form, namely the "gateway advertisement", also known as a link ad. This gateway is typically a graphic displayed on the editorial or directory site. If the customer chooses, he/she can click on the graphic, from which they are then transported to the advertiser's home page. This form of non-intrusive advertising has proven to be an effective means of building Website traffic. As the Web becomes more populated, this form of advertising will become even more essential.

  High-traffic sites sell other companies space on their Web pages for displaying these gateway advertisements. These take the form of banners, logos or icons. At present banner ads remain the most popular. The favoured size is approximately 2.50 cm strip, as wide as the Netscape or Internet Explorer screen, known as banner ads. When customers visit these high-traffic sites and are intrigued by these gateway banners they can choose to ignore them, or click on them and are then transported to that Webpage, in the form of a non-intrusive invitation to learn more about the company or institution who has placed this banner advertisement. Our sponsors can also be encouraged to place banner ads on our Website and in this way provide additional awareness of the library's services and stature in its community.

  In the February IAB (13) report it is also pointed out that banner advertisements are still reported as the most predominant type of advertising, accounting for 53% of total online adverts. It therefore becomes imperative that the Unisa Library research the viability of these advertisements on its Website.

At present a workgroup is establishing a policy concerning gateway advertising not only for the Unisa Library, but the University as a whole.

Gateway advertisements, however, are certainly not the only way to use the Net to advertise a Website.

- **Product information and recommendation**

On the Unisa Library's Website (http://www.unisa.ac.za/library/index.html) all future training sessions dates and venues are posted monthly, by our Webmaster Mrs Sandra Hartzer (hatrzs@alpha.unisa.ac.za) advertising all the training offered by the library to students and all Unisa staff as well as community training. This training involves inter alia basic and advanced Internet training, basic and advanced library skills and the use of subject specific databases. All locally created databases are also advertised. Another major development at the Unisa Library is the creation of an electronic reserves facility, implemented by Mrs Ansie Watkins (watkiapj@alpha.unisa.ac.za). Our Webpage gives access to all developments concerning this at the Unisa Library as well as links locally and worldwide to this facility.

Other product information available at the library is also advertised, such as access to electronic journals and locally created databases, such as a music collection database and a slide collection database. This highlights the fact that a Website should not be used to advertise the library or institution, per se, but the products that the library has to offer it's online customer.

- **Establishing customer discussion panels and creating a dialogue.**

It is essential, if a library becomes market driven, to establish a dialogue with its customer to ascertain the satisfaction levels of its customers as well as their future needs. Discussions are underway to establish listservs for the library to encourage dialogue. A feature on our online catalogue for posting suggestions already is operational. This has proven to be well used. Although it was established to acquire suggestions for the future development of the catalogue, it is used by our customers to make suggestions on all library matters, as well as general University matters. This indicates the hunger customers have to make a contribution.

Accessible via our Library Homepage is our Students Online (SOL) feature which enables the student to access his/her student information, assignment marks and credits, exam timetables and other relevant information. Assignments can be posted online and students are able to communicate with a selection of lecturers electronically. Access to this is by password only, therefore all information is confidential.

Also available on the Internet are Websites such as Delphi (http://www.delphi.com) which undertake to establish online chat sessions at given periods of choice in order to have live discussions with other interested parties, remotely as well as on-campus customers. This could be a valuable avenue to establish customer needs.

- **Targeting specific demographic groups**

As explained above certain groups of customers have been identified as specific target groups. Questionnaires will be sent to these groups by surface mail or conducted telephonically at first. Eventually online questionnaires and surveys via electronic mailing lists or listservs might be distributed, once these have been created and databases of customers and their details and areas of interest have been compiled. Banner ads for specific target groups can also be placed on Websites

with preferably similar target groups. As an example, one library could purchase advertising space on another similar library's Website and vice versa. This could work well in the GAELIC Consortium environment that the Unisa Library has entered into. Here no revenue needs to be exchanged, but goodwill, in the form of one library advertising special aspects of information supply of another library, e.g a good collection of online information concerning legal or business and economic information.

- **Evaluating gateway success**

  The question then arises as to whether the gateway advertisement which your library has bought space for, on a specific Website, was a good choice and is attracting traffic to your site. By installing a counter on your own Website the Webmaster can identify the number of visits to your site, for example the Unisa Library was able to determine that our site was visited 59,000 times from June 1997 to March 1999. Other statistics can also be kept by installing the counter to provide other types of statistics, namely whether the visits were on- or off-campus, as well as if certain divisions in the library's Web pages were visited more than other's. The Unisa Library has also, via a counter, been able to observe that the text version of the Webpage is not being used frequently enough to warrant retaining it.

- **Pricing**

  Pricing is an important part of the product value offer, but remains the most difficult aspect for our library, as more research will have to be done concerning competitive rates. Independent revenue generation for the library of the 21st Century is essential for it to remain relevant and competitive. This is an ongoing and ever changing aspect of marketing, as certain products become superfluous and new products are demanded.

- **Getting listed in directories**

  The online world is vast and can be difficult to navigate. There are three ways in which this can be approached, depending on constraints of budget and staff time, since getting listed can be tedious and time consuming. Free software is available on the Internet by means of which the library Webmaster or an assigned member of staff can do this independently. Yahoo (http://www.yahoo.com), is one of the quickest and most reliable maps of the Internet as well as online search engines, such as Webcrawler (http://www.webcrawler.com), and Altavista (http://www.altavista.digital.com) each with its own strengths and weaknesses. Another alternative is using Websites that provide the service for, you at a cost. These sites automate the submission of site descriptions to a specific group of directories, for example, Ryan Scott's Postmaster and WPRC Website Promotion Services. It is essential to index information on your Website effectively with searchable metadata elements.

- **Joining industry hubsites**

  Libraries can also join industry hubsites which are subject related. Industry hubsites bring together related businesses for the convenience of the consumer. Some industry hubs offer to create and maintain home pages for their members. The synergy of sharing the same space with other similar libraries could be valuable. Some are free of charge, while others involve costs.

- **E-commerce**

  The Unisa Library's media ordering and acquisition department is investigating developments in the

field of e-commerce. At present the University is investigating the introduction of a SmartCard system for students. Research has proved worldwide that these cards are more secure than credit cards.

Years of contact with book publishers and vendors brought the entrepreneurial ideas of our acquisitions librarian, Mrs Jean Maree (mareeja@alpha.unisa.ac.za) to the fore. She has developed a South African publishing industry database, which could possibly be used as a trading network which could be made available electronically. This has the potential to generate revenue from publishers and vendors who buy advertising space on this database for various advertising packages. When searching on the Internet one often finds a banner ad popping up for amazon.com with the message "Buy books on ..." on the topic you are searching. This offers intrusive advertising for the institution. Similarly the library can use this to generate revenue and bolster its e-commerce drive.

- **Internal marketing**

When a paradigm shift occurs within a library, where it becomes customer driven, the staff of the library must be included. The need to establish an Intranet became evident, both to distribute all library documentation and involve staff. All matters relevant to the library staff are posted on the Intranet and staff are encouraged to use this tool to keep abreast of changes and trends. Fliers with information about the Intranet and its URL have been distributed to the library staff at Unisa.

Conclusion

This has been a brief look into the marketing voyage of discovery of the Unisa Library. Land has only just been sited and careful steps have to be taken while we enter this unknown yet panoramic future. If one considers the advances in computer engineering with so many computers being sold as multimedia systems, the time is ripe for marketers to add a plethora of new enhancements to their marketing plans. Personal notification will be in demand via e-mail, pagers and fax. Online marketing is new and constantly changing. As new tools evolve let us use these as new strategies to win over, retain and create a dialogue between the customer and the library. In the competitive information age, markets just simply do not stand still. Every development on the Internet will have to be embraced by the marketer and the librarian. We as librarians remain in the information business but a paradigm shift from the custodian, to the bridge builders, between our customers, our organization and ourselves will become the driving force. Let us, join hands, make alliances and enjoy the great new customer world, even though the 21st Century librarian may arrive, using a brand new hat.

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List of Acronyms

GAELIC - Gauteng and Environs Library Consortium

IAB - Internet Advertising Bureau

SOL - Students Online

URL - Uniform Resource Locator

Biographical details: Kathy Kunneke

I joined the Unisa Library in 1976 and have worked in both the Acquisitions and Cataloguing Departments. Our cataloguing activities are conducted in various self-managed teams each servicing certain faculties. At present I am the coordinator of the Economics, Management and Law Faculty Team which consists of five staff members. I was involved in the development of products in the Strategic Enterprise Modeling exercise and consequently with the marketing plans being implemented at the Unisa Library. At present I am completing my Masters degree in Information Science at Unisa entitled: The paradigmatic shift of service organisations in South Africa: a marketing model for university libraries.

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